

Iran increases number of pilgrims

NIKOSIA (AP) — Iran has agreed with Saudi Arabia that 120,000 Iranian pilgrims will make the pilgrimage to Mecca next year, an increase of 20,000 over this year, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported Sunday. The agency said the agreement was reached during a recent visit to Saudi Arabia by the head of Iran's pilgrimage delegation, Mohammad Mohammadi Rassanji. The annual pilgrimage takes place in June of the coming year. Iran and Saudi Arabia's relations, broken off in the wake of riots in Mecca in 1987 in which 402 pilgrims, most of them Iranian, were killed in clashes with police. After the riots, Saudi Arabia had sharply reduced the number of Iranian pilgrims, which was estimated at 150,000 the year before the riots. The Iranian agency said slightly more than 100,000 Iranians performed the pilgrimage this year, a sharp increase from recent years and a reflection of improving relations between Riyadh and Tehran. Iran remained neutral in the Gulf war that ousted Iraqi troops from Kuwait, and has been seeking to improve relations with its Gulf Arab neighbours under the leadership of its pragmatic president, Hashemi Rafsanjani.

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Baker begins Soviet visit

MOSCOW (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, opening a five-day visit to what he called the "former Soviet Union," was asked Sunday for formal U.S. recognition of republics' independence from the Kremlin. "This will help to crystallise authority," and to "stop further disintegration," said Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev after meeting Mr. Baker at the Russian Foreign Ministry late Sunday. But Mr. Baker hedged, saying "these are essential political issues that are internal" and which the Bush administration would not inject itself in the political struggle between Mikhail Gorbachev's central government and the new commonwealth of independent states. Mr. Baker arrived in Moscow earlier Sunday, carrying to the faltering Soviet Union undisclosed proposals for accelerating the reduction of the estimated 27,000 nuclear weapons stockpiled in four republics. The imminent breakup of the old union is raising concerns that the weapons cannot be safeguarded indefinitely. (See related story on page 8).

Red Cross worker shot in Mogadishu dies

GENEVA (AP) — A Red Cross relief worker shot in the Somali capital of Mogadishu died during the flight back to his native Belgium, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Sunday. An ICRC statement said Wim van Boxelaere died of respiratory failure Saturday on the aircraft taking him from Nairobi to Antwerp. He was 30. He was shot last Wednesday in front of the headquarters of the Somali Red Crescent. Mogadishu has been wracked by growing apathy and chaos during one month of inter-clan fighting.

Havel in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Czechoslovakia's Vaclav Havel arrived in Egypt on Sunday for a three-day visit during which he will meet with President Hosni Mubarak. Mr. Mubarak received Mr. Havel at the airport. He then escorted his visitor, who is visiting Egypt for the first time, to the Kubba Presidential Palace where Mr. Havel was honoured with an official welcome ceremony. The two leaders will meet on Monday and they are expected to discuss the Middle East peace process, that was launched in Madrid, Spain on Oct. 30.

Iran speaker leaves for China

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian Parliamentary Speaker Mehdi Karroubi left for China Sunday, Iran's national news agency IRNA said. Mr. Karroubi is accompanied by Commerce Minister Abdolhossein Vahabi, Agriculture Minister Issa Kalantari and First Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati. Mr. Karroubi's 10-day trip will also take him to Yemen.

Guerillas rocket 'security zone'

BEIRUT (AP) — The National Resistance Front, a coalition of leftist Lebanese factions, claimed Sunday its guerrillas fired two Katyusha rockets before dawn into Israel's self-styled "security zone" in South Lebanon. A communiqué by the front in Beirut said an "enemy post was directly hit" near the village of Saff Al Hawa in the zone's Bint Jbeil district just north of the Israeli border. The communiqué said there was no word on damage or casualties in the post, which it claimed was a centre for officers and members of an Israeli intelligence unit.

Turkish Airlines resumes trips to Beirut

BEIRUT (R) — A Turkish Airlines DC-9 landed at Beirut international airport Sunday, resuming flights to Lebanon after a 15-year break due to civil war. The step brought to 18 the number of foreign airlines which have resumed flights to Beirut since the end of Lebanon's civil war with the overthrow of rebel General Michel Aoun in October last year.

Bilaterals resume today; prospects uncertain

By Jordan Times Staff Reporters in Washington

ARAB-ISRAELI bilateral talks resume today at the State Department, and the focus will again be on reaching a final accord on the framework for independent Palestinian representation within the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Since negotiations adjourned last Thursday, the joint delegation has been holding extensive meetings to prepare a counter-proposal to Israel's insistence that the joint delegation be the legal reference for any agreements reached in the separate tracks — Palestinian and Jordanian.

Although the Israelis have recognised the dual-track approach to the negotiations, disagreement

also remained over how often a plenary meeting, which would bring the joint delegation and Israelis together, would be held and how many delegations from each of the three parties would attend.

In their last proposal, made Thursday evening, the Israelis wanted the plenary meetings to be the reference point for the separate Palestinian and Jordanian negotiating teams. The Jordanians and Palestinians will insist that plenary meetings only deal with "procedural issues and not issues of substance concerning the separate agendas," a Jordanian delegate said.

Palestinian delegates appeared cautious Sunday over whether Monday's meetings of the heads of three parties will resolve the

issue and end a week of corridor diplomacy.

"We do not know where we will end up, the Israelis are very stubborn on the issue of the legal reference," one delegate said.

Another Jordanian delegate, also cautious in his assessment of chances for progress in Monday's session, said that the wrangling over separating the two tracks "is crucial and sets the tone for the whole process because the issues discussed now will prejudice the final agreement."

Although it is not certain that the problem will be resolved on Monday, Arab delegates are trying not to resort to the compromise options open to them.

However, the head of the Palestinian delegation, Haidar

Abdul Shafi, and members of the steering committee reportedly met Sunday with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs Edward Djerdjian. No details of the meeting were immediately available.

Arab diplomats and delegates say they expect the Israeli delegation to "soften its procedural demands" this week as the deadline for their stay in Washington nears.

The diplomats and sources close to the Israeli delegation say the Israelis may put forward a comprehensive peace package to Jordan as well as an Interim Self-Government Arrangement (ISGA) proposal to the Palestinian delegations before leaving for Israel later this week.

If indeed they do this, the

sources said, it could be an attempt to put the "ball back into the Arab court in order to score points at Arab expense with the American administration and media."

"The Israelis want to appear to be pushing peace forward with this last dramatic gesture before leaving the U.S. capital," said one Arab delegate, who insisted on anonymity. "But in fact what they are doing is trying to score a point to their advantage without staying behind to carry out substantive discussions of their proposals," he added.

Observers say Jordanians and Palestinians will seek to prevent such a course of events because they consider presenting such packages at this time as "putting the horse before the cart."

"The issue of separation of the delegation and finalising the procedural framework necessary to carry it out is the crux of the conflict. The definition of the Palestinian identity and its status is the core issue," one observer said.

But if this scenario materialises this week, the Arab delegates will take the proposal and study it in detail, but they will continue to insist on resolving the separation issue prior to discussion of the Israeli peace and ISGA packages.

The Syrian and Lebanese delegations will also meet with their Israeli counterparts Monday to continue talks, which proceeded uninterrupted last week despite reports by Syrian delegates that there was no progress made.

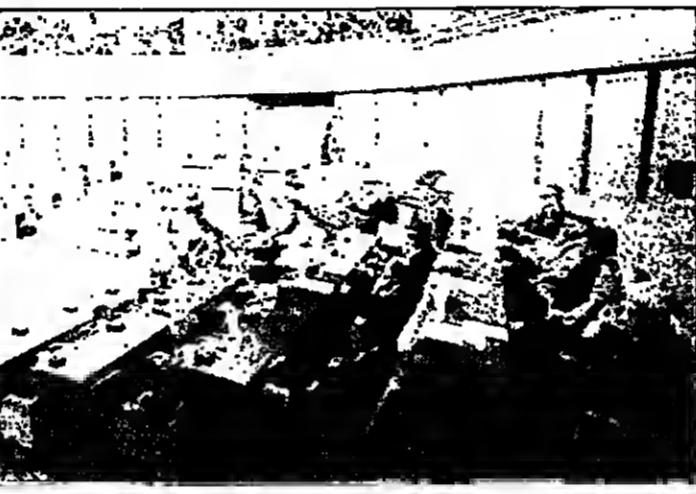
A Lebanese delegate who insisted on anonymity said that the

delegation would discuss the venue of bilateral talks but he said they will continue to insist on remaining in the U.S. capital until progress is achieved.

Israel had insisted on moving the talks to or near the region. Israeli delegations are expected to argue that the talks might make better progress if they are removed from the glare of the media attention in Washington to some place where they will attract less publicity.

But the Lebanese delegate told journalists in a briefing that the "lack of newspaper and television attention the bilateral talks have so far received undercuts this argument."

George Hawatmeh, Nermene Murad and Ghader Taher contributed to this report.



Two scenes from Sunday's session of the Lower House of Parliament (photos by Yousef Al 'Allan)

Sharif Zeid government poised to secure vote of confidence today

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Beo Shaker was Sunday assured of parliamentary endorsement with a comfortable margin as speeches by deputies in the Lower House drew to a close on the first day of the vote of confidence session.

Parliamentary observers as well as members in the Sharif Zeid cabinet, which took office last month, expected a minimum of 48 votes in favour of the government when the actual voting process takes place on the floor Monday against the needed absolute majority of 41 votes in the 80-member House.

The "yes" vote which were pledged in support of the government Sunday included several leftist and pan-Arab nationalist lawmakers who argued that the peace talks would not produce a settlement addressing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Israeli conflict — the quest for Palestinian national rights.

The "no" vote which were pledged in support of the government Sunday included several leftist and pan-Arab nationalist lawmakers who argued that the peace talks would not produce a settlement addressing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Israeli conflict — the quest for Palestinian national rights.

As widely expected, the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which has 22 deputies in the House, said it would vote against

the government since the group opposed not only the ongoing peace talks with Israel in which Jordan is taking part but also the whole concept of any negotiations with the Jewish state.

Others who indicated they would vote "no" included several leftist and pan-Arab nationalist lawmakers who argued that the peace talks would not produce a settlement addressing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Israeli conflict — the quest for Palestinian national rights.

The "no" vote which were pledged in support of the government Sunday included several leftist and pan-Arab nationalist lawmakers who argued that the peace talks would not produce a settlement addressing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Israeli conflict — the quest for Palestinian national rights.

On the peace talks, Deputy Khreisat said: "Based on our principled stand towards the so-called peace with the enemy (Israel) and the efforts to achieve that, we are obliged to reject such negotiations."

"Therefore, we withhold our vote of confidence in the government," he declared.

Deputies, ranging from pro-establishment traditionalists to the right and left of the Jordanian political spectrum, addressed the House Sunday and also tackled issues such as Jordan's role in the new world order, the national economy, the Kingdom's agreement with the IMF, the standard and cost of living, agriculture,

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Iran seeking to replace Iraq as Sudan's main backer

KHARTOUM (AP) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani appeared Sunday to be moving to fill a military and economic vacuum resulting from Iraq's defeat in the Gulf war and form a radical alliance with Sudan.

The Iranian leader is also believed to be trying to compensate for diminishing influence in Lebanon.

The move appears to be worrying Egypt, Sudan's northern neighbour, and other moderate Arabs as well as Western countries.

Mr. Rafsanjani, on the second day of a three-day state visit to Sudan, the first by an Iranian head of state since the 1979 Islamic revolution, pledged to put all Iran's "experience in the fields of construction, industry, rehabilitation and defence," at Sudan's disposal.

He made the pledge at a mass rally in Khartoum attended by representatives of the popular committees which was pattered after those founded in Libya.

Sudan has developed close ties with Libya but the two countries' relations have reportedly been strained lately because Libya suspected that Sudanese Muslim fundamentalists were trying to spread their ideology to Libya and other Arab countries.

The government of military leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir is greatly influenced by the radical National Islamic Front, led by Hassan Turabi.

"After the demise of the Com-

unist system and given the potentials of Sudan and Iran in as many fields, we should have a major role in shaping the future of the world as Muslims," Mr. Rafsanjani told the rally.

The official Iranian news agency IRNA reported meanwhile that the two countries concluded commercial talks aimed at establishing a shipping line, expanding tele-communications links and setting up a joint chamber of commerce.

It said a Sudanese delegation would soon visit Iran to purchase agricultural machinery and quoted a local Sudanese newspaper as saying that two Iranian ships laden with road machinery were to arrive in Sudan within the next two weeks under an agreement reached during an earlier visit to Khartoum of Iranian Minister of Construction Jihad Gholamreza Forouzesh.

The two sides also agreed that Sudan export corn, meat, vegetable oil and animal skins to Iran and purchase agricultural machinery, electric appliances, buses, oil and its derivatives from Islamic law.

Meanwhile, Sudan's armed forces Chief-of-Staff General Hassan Abdul Rahman Ali and commander of Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Mohsen Rezaie met to discuss closer cooperation.

The talks were a continuation of those started Friday by Lieutenant-General Bashir and Iran's Minister of Defence and

to compensate for shrinking presence in Lebanon.

It quoted unidentified Saudi, Egyptian and American officials as saying that Iran has sent between 1,000 and 2,000 Revolutionary Guards to train Sudanese army and security forces.

In Cairo, Samir Ragab, a newspaper editor known to be close to President Hosni Mubarak, wrote last week that Gen. Bashir is making "big mistake" by expecting Iran to save Sudan from its political and economic difficulties.

He said that Gen. Bashir and his aides will "soon discover that Iranian fingers are meddling in their internal affairs."

Mr. Rafsanjani and Gen. Bashir met earlier Saturday and decided to form three joint committees to look after promoting cooperation. The two leaders held an hour-long tête-à-tête meeting later Friday.

At the rally held in Thier Ertweit area of Khartoum Saturday



Armed Forces Logistics Akbar Torkan.



Hashemi Rafsanjani

day, Mr. Rafsanjani wondered why Muslims, being quarter of the world population, with their human and material resources, should be so weak in the face of Zionism and imperialism.

He said Muslims now sitting with Israel "will feel ashamed of themselves" if they were to see the enthusiasm, faith and courage of the people who gathered to greet him. He was referring to the current Mideast peace talks in Washington.

Foreign Affairs Minister Akbar Velayati, Minister of Commerce Abdol Hosseini Vahabi, Information Minister Ali Fallahian and Head of the Plan and Budget Organisation Massoud Roghani Zanjani were among the delegation accompanying Mr. Rafsanjani.

The Iranian president and his delegation arrived here Friday after attending a summit meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in Dakar, Senegal.

The Iraqi leader, flanked by bodyguards, said there were daily reports in the West that a military coup was imminent and Western countries were seeking agents to launch an uprising.

"But such trivial dwarves do not exist in Iraq," he said.

Washington has vowed to maintain pressure on Iraq and said U.N. Security Council sanctions cannot be lifted as long as President Saddam remains in power, but the Iraqi leader has such a tight grip on the military that few analysts see any possibility of a coup from within.

Baghdad crushed anti-government rebellion in the Kurdish north and the Shiites south in February.

The Kurds continue to challenge his rule and their militias control a large strip of the mountainous north.

Iraq's National Assembly last week expelled five members, four Sunnis and a Kurd, accusing them of treason, a charge which automatically carries the death penalty.

President Saddam earlier handed out "Mother Of All Battles" sashet and medals to more than 30 officers. He walked down a line of military men, embracing and joking with them while he pinned on the star-shaped awards.

The awards entitle officers to become "friends of the president," an honour which carries privileges including land, a car and the right to see President Saddam once every three months.

President Saddam said U.N. sanctions would be worn away in time by foreign business interests which needed to sell goods to Iraq.

He said Iraq would repair its war damage unaided and could face nothing worse than the six weeks of U.S.-led bombing in January and February.

"I believe there can be nothing more serious than what has happened. We have crossed to the other side," he said.

He said he could not promise the Gulf war would be the last battle faced by his people, who were at war with Iran from 1980-88, "but I sincerely wish there will be no more."

Saddam ridicules reports of coup bids

BAGHDAD (R) — A relaxed and joking Saddam Hussein has appeared on television to ridicule foreign reports of coup attempts, showing his people and warning his officers that he is still firmly in charge.

In an informal hour-long chat with military commanders broadcast across the country on Saturday night, the Iraqi leader ridiculed foreign reports that he could be toppled, saying he was the only one who could oblige the West by starting a coup.

"Let us register the names of those who wish to participate with us so some of the Western circles can rest," he proposed playfully to officers seated around him on gilded chairs.

His comments were greeted by smiles and laughter from officers displaying medals from the Gulf war over Kuwait.

"Comrade Izzat will be the deputy commander of the coup, and I would be the commander," President Saddam joked, pointing to a laughing Izzat Ibrahim, vice-chairman of his ruling Revolution Command Council, seated at his right.

The Iraqi leader, flanked by bodyguards, said there were daily reports in the West that a military coup was imminent and Western countries were seeking agents to launch an uprising.

Iraq: Kurds selling pylons to Iran

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said Sunday Kurdish guerrillas were stealing pylons to sell to neighbouring Iran and warned of power cuts. "... Groups of gangsters in the northern area are dismantling the electrical towers and selling them as steel to Iran," said the army newspaper Al Qadisiyah.

It said the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan headed by Jalal Talabani were behind the thefts "which will lead to power cuts in some parts of the Kurdish autonomous region." Kurds say Iraq has imposed an economic blockade on the region, choking off supplies of food and fuel. Mr. Talabani's rival Massoud Barzani, head of the Kordistan Democratic Party, says Baghdad has agreed to ease the blockade in return for safety guarantees for Iraqi officials in the north. Aid workers say there is no sign of the blockade being lifted. Baghdad denies it has blocked the Kurdish region where Peshmerga are locked in a stand-off with government troops. The Kurds are known to be raising money by selling off Iraqi government equipment and machinery to Iran.

Oman, Yemen to sign border accord

DUBAI (R) — Oman and Yemen will sign an agreement in the next two weeks establishing a formal border between them, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh was quoted as saying on Sunday. Although they are straight lines in most maps, officially agreed borders between the Arabian peninsula states are very rare.

"We have advised His Majesty's (Sultan Qaboos of Oman) government that we are ready to sign an agreement and we are now awaiting the date of the ceremony from Muscat," Mr. Saleh told the English-language Gulf News in an interview in Sanaa. "The talks have gone ahead in a good and positive spirit and there are no problems and complications of any kind," Mr. Saleh told the Dubai-based daily.

North and South Yemen merged in May last year. Relations between Oman and South Yemen were strained by the former Marxist state's support for an insurgency against Muscat in Dhofar province in the 1970s. The two Arabian Peninsula neighbours established diplomatic relations in 1982, six years after the defeat of the Dbofari rebels, and decided to normalize ties.

Iraqi philharmonic plans to end Wagner ban

TEL AVIV (R) — Jews who survived the Nazi Holocaust protested at reports Sunday that the Israeli philharmonic orchestra plans to drop a 50-year ban on music by Richard Wagner, Adolf Hitler's favourite composer. Israeli Parliamentary Speaker Dov Shilansky appealed to the orchestra to drop plans — reported by the daily newspaper Yedioth Ahronot and Israel Radio — to play works by the 19th century German composer at a Tel Aviv concert later this month. A Holocaust survivor, Mr. Shilansky said he had received many complaints about the reports, telling the radio: "I appeal in the name of all those who are in pain — and they are many — to have mercy." The orchestra has predated Israel's 1948 creation. Hitler, whose Germany exterminated six million people in World War II, made Wagner — known for his anti-Semitic political writings — the posthumous führer of music. An orchestra spokeswoman reserved comment on the reports until a Tel Aviv news conference scheduled for Monday with Daniel Barenboim, who reports say would conduct the concert. The newspaper said the orchestra on Friday voted 39-12 with nine abstentions to lift the ban. It said they would play two Wagner compositions — the overtures to the operas "The Flying Dutchman" and "Tristan and Isolde." Israel radio and television refuse to play Wagner's works. The philharmonic orchestra sparked an uproar in 1981 by trying to play a Wagner piece for an encore. Shouted down by his Tel Aviv audience, music director Zubin Mehta halted the performance and all went home.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Association urges release of Kuwaiti journalists

RABAT (AP) — The Federation of Arab News Agencies Saturday appealed to Iraq to release journalists belonging to the Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA) it is holding 10 months after the Gulf war ended. The federation also called on Iraq to return all equipment it seized from KUNA during Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait that began in August 1990. The congress of Arab News agency directors also said they hoped the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization would extend technical help to KUNA to enable it to resume transmitting news. The Arab News directors elected Abdul Jalil Fenjiri, director general of the Moroccan press agency, as the federation's president to succeed Barjiss Hammoud Al Barjiss, director general of KUNA.

Djibouti army destroys rebel base

DJIBOUTI (R) — The Djibouti army said Sunday it had destroyed a base of the rebel Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) near Tadjourah in northern Djibouti. A military spokesman said in a radio interview in Djibouti that 30 rebels were killed and two captured, while the government forces lost two dead and six wounded. Large quantities of arms, ammunition and documents were captured in Friday's action. Fighting as been going on in northern Djibouti since Nov. 17, when FRUD forces, made up of Afar tribesmen who oppose the neighbouring Issa tribe who dominate the Djibouti government, launched attacks near the Ethiopian border. Afars from Ethiopia, reported to include former members of the militia of Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam, who was ousted in May, are supporting the Djibouti Afars. France maintains a detachment of troops in Djibouti. French troops have been patrolling border areas but have not been taking part in what France considers to be an internal dispute.

Fire leaves 50,000 homeless in Ethiopia

NAIROBI (AP) — About 50,000 were left homeless by a fire that gutted a town in southeastern Ethiopia, Ethiopian radio reported. The broadcast Saturday night quoted an official in Bare, about 65 kilometers south of the capital, Addis Ababa, as saying the fire raged for several days because there was no fire fighting equipment. The unidentified official said the victims needed food and clothes. He said the presence of 600,000 Somali refugees who have fled civil war in their homeland had worsened the situation in the border town. The radio report made no mention of any deaths or say when the fire broke out.

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CHARITY BAZAAR: De-pushing for Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Has- san, Her Royal Highness Princess Ralma Bint Al Has- san Sunday opened a charity bazaar organised by Al His-sah Society for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped. Taking part in the bazaar, whose proceeds will go to the benefit of the physically handicapped, were 25 exhibitors. On display at the bazaar were traditional items and handicrafts made by the physically handicapped themselves.

The society was established in 1972 to provide training and rehabilitation services to the physically handicapped.



Author wonders why Petra wonders remain unpublicised

By Nur Safi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A French writer is currently in the country to write a script about the ancient Nabatean city of Petra, in southern Jordan.

The script will be incorporated into a book about the rose-red city to be published in French and Arabic.

Anne Wade Minkowski, joining 11 other Arab and French writers and literary people in compiling the book, said each writer will write about an event that took place in Petra or about Petra itself. "But, the main idea," she said, "will be left up to the author."

The invitation to the authors was in collaboration with the French Cultural Centre in Jordan and the Ministry of Tourism.

The writers were chosen in view of what they had already written. Most of their writings were fiction stories about archaeological sites but which took place in historical places, according to Mrs. Minkowski.

Mrs. Minkowski, who specialises in contemporary Arabic literature, said she would not reveal her story yet. But, "now that I have visited the city, I think it is one of the wonders of the world," she said. "It is surprising though Petra is not more well known

than it is. People know about Petra but they do not really know what it is. I myself did not know there was so much to see."

The book is scheduled to be on the shelves by the end of 1992 or beginning 1993.

Mrs. Minkowski has translated a great deal of literary work from French into Arabic, such as the works of the Syrian Poet Adoni who is "the greatest living Arabic poet."

"It made me happy that he is now well known in the French literary circles," she said.

Mrs. Minkowski also translated short stories by the Egyptian author, Yousef Idris, who passed away last year. In addition she also translated works by a Sudanese author and other poems from the 10th and 11th centuries. At present, the writer is translating Jibril Khalil Jibril's book "The Prophet" into French.

France's interest in the Nabatean city of Petra has increased recently as a three-member scientific team visited the site last month and spent two weeks studying the corrosion of the rocks at the "King's Tomb" to conduct tests, determine the causes and find solutions behind the rock corrosion.

"I think there is a growing interest by France in preserving universal cultural heritage," Mrs.

Minkowski told the Jordan Times. "France is quite active in this domain. I think if Petra is talked about enough and there are initiatives — such as this book — then people will be more aware. But so far, the public is not quite aware of what is going on," she added.

Literary speaking, Mrs. Minkowski said that 10 years ago the French literary people did not know much about Arabic literature but now since the public is opening up to Arabic works "it has gone well with the French public."

"They are discovering something new," she pointed out.

"We are trying now to bring Arab authors into France. This sort of scheme has a big impact on the public; it does a lot to make such literature more well known," Mrs. Minkowski said.

She said that the Gulf war did not really affect the public or the publishers in France because it did not last long enough. "At some points though, there was a tendency to postpone publishing. They (publishers) would say, 'wait and see how things turn out.' But it did not have a negative direct effect on Arabic literature," she said. "In France, people are eager to discover this world, for them it is relatively unknown, different and interesting."

Liven Christmas with live trees from government

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanians celebrating Christmas this year can buy Christmas trees from the Ministry of Agriculture's Range and Afforestation Department, according to Azzam Muheisein, director of the Forestry Department at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr. Muheisein said that people can buy Christmas trees at the department's station in Kamaleh, Sweileh.

Mr. Muheisein appealed to the public to refrain from cutting down trees from forests or from along-side roads and streets.

He said that cutting down trees was forbidden by law and the practice runs contrary to the Kingdom's drive to green all parts of the country.

The ministry's nurseries produce millions of tree saplings each year and most of them are planted during Arbor Day celebrations, usually in January.

The Ministry of Agriculture usually distributes saplings free of charge or for nominal fees to government departments, schools, organisations, municipalities and individuals to be planted in the country in the winter season.

Masri points to experts, researchers to reform basic education system

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates from 12 Arab countries opened a five-day meeting in Amman to discuss the role of educational research centres in promoting basic education in the Arab World.

The conference organised by the Amman-based regional office of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in cooperation with the National Centre for Educational Research and Development, will focus on methods of research in basic education, priorities in the educational process, prospects for developing the appropriate mechanisms for imparting education and exchange of information resulting from research among Arab states.

In addressing the opening session, Jordan's representative said that the Kingdom was going ahead with plans for cooperation with Arab states on the one hand and the UNESCO offices on the other with a view to promoting education in general.

Munther Al Masri, who is also Minister of Education secretary general said that education deepens concepts, enhances the national feelings for forging an Arab unity and promotes the spirit of democracy in the Arab society.

He said that the conference is designed to enrich the educational experiments in the Arab World.

This conference is also aimed at enabling the Arab states to spread education and achieve the target of the 1990s: "Providing Education for all by the year 2000," as was decided at the U.N.-sponsored educational conference in Thailand in March of 1990, Dr. Masri pointed out.

He said Jordan was closely cooperating with UNESCO and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) in order to achieve the goals of education for all by the end of the present century and to introduce changes designed to improve the quality of education for children.

"In Jordan's view," Dr. Masri said, "special emphasis should be laid on the role of experts and researchers in Jordanian universities which can help the ministries of education in the Arab World boost basic education at schools."

Dr. Masri criticised the existing system of the Arab World as lacking the basic educational information and failing to adopt national educational policies based on scientific research.

UNESCO representative, Abdul Qader Al Atrash, said the Arab World was facing a real challenge represented in its ability to train its human resources in a manner that would help implement the requirements of sustainable development by utilisation of modern technology.

Dr. Atrash said UNESCO's educational innovation programme aims at bolstering basic



Manal Al Mulqi and her two children

Can Zionism not be racism?

Palestinians know more than the General Assembly

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Palestinian men and women deported from their homeland by the Israeli authorities have voiced their condemnation of a move on the part of the General Assembly to rescind its 1975 resolution that equates Zionism with racism.

She demanded to be reunited with her two children and her husband to lead a normal life.

Mahmoud Fannoun, 35, and one of 1,449 Palestinian men deported from the occupied territories, described his living away from his homeland "like a tree uprooted from the ground."

"I was deported in 1982 and was left stranded at Wadi Ara in Jordan where I was found by the Jordanian authorities," he said. The deportation came after spending a number of years in detention without trial, Mr. Fannoun said.

Masaoud Zueiter, 45, another deportee and father of six children said that he spent several years in a Nablus prison before he was deported to Lebanon in 1989. "I left my wife and children in the West Bank and I am not allowed to see them," Mr. Zueiter complained.

An injured boy who is being currently treated at one of Amman's hospitals told the Jordan Times that he was coming out of school with his mates "when one of the Israeli troops seized me and began beating me and accusations of throwing stones on soldiers."

He said the soldier beat him and broke his legs and he was left without treatment, lying in one of the streets of Hebron, until the medical staff arrived.

"When I was finally deported in September of 1990 I returned to Amman where I now live and where my husband visits me from time to time. But I need to live with my husband and children," she said.

According to Majed Milhem from the occupied territories' Research and Study Department the rate of illiteracy among Arabs under Israeli rule now stands at 14.4 per cent, compared with 4.3 per cent among the Israelis.

Dr. Milhem said that Israel is continuing a practice of closing down schools and universities at will and exercises all sorts of atrocities against the Arabs.

It is high time to pay income tax

AMMAN (Petra) — The Income Tax Department has issued a call to all citizens to settle their income tax obligations before the end of the year to avoid paying fines at the rate of 1.5 per cent on each month of delay afterwards.

The department's statement noted that those required to submit income statements during 1991 should do so before Dec. 31 to avoid paying other fines that range between two and 24 per cent of the total amount of taxes.

The statement said that those required by law to submit a statement outlining their income during the year were all those earning an annual income exceeding JD\$1,000 whether they were employees, businessmen, merchants and others.



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HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Bahrain

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday sent a cable to Bahraini leaders, Sheikh Issa Ben Sulaiman Al Khalifa, congratulating him on his country's new year. The King wished Sheikh Issa continued good health and happiness and the Bahraini people further progress and prosperity.

Ambassador-designate presents credentials

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber Sunday received copies of the credentials of the newly appointed Turkish ambassador to Jordan, Mehmet Ertimisli.

Commission denounces Israeli practices

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Commission for Jerusalem Affairs Sunday denounced the terrorist Israeli practices in Jerusalem and the escalation of building settlements in the holy city, saying that the escalation of these measures at this particular time is aimed at obstructing the peace march, and aborting it. A spokesman for the commission also said that the Israeli campaign coincided with the Dakar Islamic conference, which was held last week. He called on the Islamic countries which took part in the conference to shoulder their religious, political and humanitarian responsibilities towards Jerusalem and the other Islamic places in the occupied Arab territories.

Training symposium for special teaching ends

AMMAN (Petra) — A week-long regional training symposium on children with special needs in the ordinary classes concluded here Sunday and adopted a recommendation calling for preparing flexible and adjustable curricula. Participants called for reconsidering the methods used in training teachers in the participating countries. At the end of their meetings, they recommended that the educational package prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), to improve the teachers performance, be adopted and applied. Taking part in the symposium were Jordan, Bahrain, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Oman.

Jordan participates in Arab legal talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is taking part in the Arab League legal committee meeting which is due to open in Cairo Monday. Judge Rifaa Shamout, head of the Higher Court of Justice in Amman said the committee would discuss a number of draft agreements among Arab states including matters related to the status of Palestinian refugees now living in Arab countries and an agreement between the Arab League and the Islamic Bank as well as the declaration of pan-Arab principles on countering air piracy. Mr. Shamout, who is heading the Jordanian delegation to the four-day meetings, made the statement shortly before his departure for the Egyptian capital.

New Horizons For
Innovative Services

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.

Established 1975

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Equality for women

THE SYMPOSIUM, women in employment and development of the Arab World, being launched today is a timely endeavour that calls for the full participation of all women and men dedicated to the cause of eliminating all remaining vestiges of discrimination between men and women. The Pan-Arab Association for Women in Development and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which are jointly organising the conference, deserve to be commended for bringing to the fore a pressing issue that has left women's role in development neglected for too long. In this vein, there is no escape from the conclusion that women's contributions to their societies, be they economic, cultural or social, can never be enhanced to their full extents and dimensions without the eradication of all traces of negative discrimination against women. In this context it is comforting to note that the government is on the verge of ratifying the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in December of 1979 and went into force in September 1981. In its preamble paragraph, this convention notes that the state parties to the international covenants on human rights have entered into a clear obligation to ensure and accord equal rights to men and women in order to enable both to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. The same section of the convention reaffirms that discrimination against women violates the principle of equality between human beings and deprives women of the opportunities to participate on equal terms and footing with men in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their respective countries. For attaining such goals, the state parties are called upon to "adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women." It even goes further when it requires the state parties "to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices... and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women."

In its cumulative sense this human rights instrument in effect calls for affirmative action in order to elevate the role and participation of women in the development of their countries to a position of equality. Translated into more concrete manifestations, Jordan, in which women have over the years gained a great deal of equality, would be treaty obliged to take specific affirmative actions in order to increase the participation of women in the economic as well as political, social and cultural life of their country. In other words, the policy of the Kingdom in this regard need to be adopted and pursued with the clear purpose of having more qualified women serving in all sectors of development. Granted that few countries have attained the ideal level of women participation, that in itself does not excuse developing countries such as Jordan from aspiring effectively to achieve such an ambitious objective.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Sunday described as a big defeat to the Arabs and Muslims the resolutions issued by the Islamic summit in Dakar. The leaders who met in Dakar have decided to maintain the genocide of the Iraqi people and to prevent the Islamic nations from launching holy wars against the aggressors who do not conceal their hatred of Arabs and Muslims and who are greedy enough to launch wars to satisfy their desires, the paper said. It is regrettable to see resolutions at an Islamic summit being bought with Islamic and Arab money for the sake of offering service to the aggressors who launched war on Iraq, continue to oppress the Palestinians and pursue their schemes to loot Arab and Islamic nations' wealth, the paper said. The Islamic leaders in Dakar have thus decided to dispose of the Iraqi people through continued starvation and embargo, to ignore the cries of the Palestinians now under repression in the occupied territories and to offer service to the Western nations, said the paper. The Muslim leaders in Dakar justified their talk for continued sanctions on Iraq by claiming that Baghdad should comply with the will of the world community and implement U.N. Security Council resolutions which it has already done, the paper said. It said that Iraq will one day rise again and its people will rebuild all that had been destroyed in the raids, but, said the paper, those Muslims and Arab leaders who took shameful decisions can by no means get rid of the shame which remains as a stigma over all their lives.

Al Dustour accused Israel of continued actions designed to abort the peace talks. Apart from the obstacles laid in the path of the negotiations in Washington, the Israelis are stepping up their repressive campaigns against the Palestinian people and allowing the settlers to occupy Arab homes while continuing a drive to evict Arabs from their homeland and violating the Palestinian human rights, said the paper. The new wave of terrorism against the Palestinians, the escalation of settlers' activities and the inhuman treatment of Arab youth in Israeli jails stand out as a proof of Israel's evil intentions while the continuing settlement programmes in Arab lands clearly expose Israel's determination to foil attempts to achieve a durable settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine problem, the paper said. Israel's action coupled with its leaders' intransigence at the Washington peace talks, said the paper, clearly indicate Israel's intentions that it does not wish to live in peace with its Arab neighbours, neither that it will ever abandon the occupied Arab lands.

Weekly Political Pulse

First things first

ISRAEL is pressing ahead for the repeal of the 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism and is attempting to make this issue part and parcel of the negotiating process on peace in the Middle East. Washington and other Western powers are also launching similar campaigns in order to use their words, to enhance the chances of the ongoing peace talks between Israel and the Arab parties. The timing of this well-orchestrated efforts to delete from the annals of the United Nations any reference to Zionism as a form of racism is of course well chosen with the collapse of the communist order in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself. This prompted the former Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin, during the U.N. General Assembly debates this year, to say that the U.N. "should once and for all leave behind the legacy of the ice age like the abominous resolution equating Zionism to racism."

Well, the significance of the timing of the mushrooming efforts to reverse that decision of the United Nations lies in the fact that among the staunch supporters of the Nov. 10, 3379 resolution were the former Warsaw Pact countries, including of course the Soviet Union. Now that pact is dead and done with, the stage is set for revoking many of the policy and legal decisions that they once voted for. Paramount among such decisions is of course the resolution equating Zionism with racism.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler told the press last week: "To equate Zionism with the intolerable sins of racism is to twist history. By repealing this resolution unconditionally," she continued to say, "the United Nations will enhance its credibility and serve the cause of peace." The most objectionable part of Mrs. Tutwiler's statement was her call for unconditional repeal of the resolution, that is if one wants to be also credible and sensible.

One can sympathise with all those voices calling for annulling the controversial decision if they coulpe their concern for Israel's reputation with an equal interest in the root causes for the adoption of the resolution in the first place. If one looks, for example, at Tel Aviv's record of human rights and their record on the ratification of relevant international instruments on human rights, including those that the Western civilisation had articulated, one would readily notice that Israel's record leaves much to be desired and therefore the way to address the complained about resolution is to rectify first this dismal Israeli record. Otherwise, the friends of Israel would be putting the cart before the horse. I, for one, would have no difficulty entertaining a "deal" envisaging the rescinding of the resolution in question in return for Israel's adherence to all the major international covenants or treaties on human rights in addition to improving its human rights record as reported not only in Arab human rights journals but also in international, renowned human rights periodicals, such as the one compiled and published by Amnesty International.

If Israel and its ardent supporters truly wish to do something positive about the 1975 resolution, let them begin by having Israel ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which came into force in 1976 and is signed and ratified by the entire Western world, scores of former Eastern bloc countries and many dozens of developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The only exception is offered by the U.S. which has yet to ratify that particular international instrument in spite of repeated protestations that it is considering seriously such a belated move.

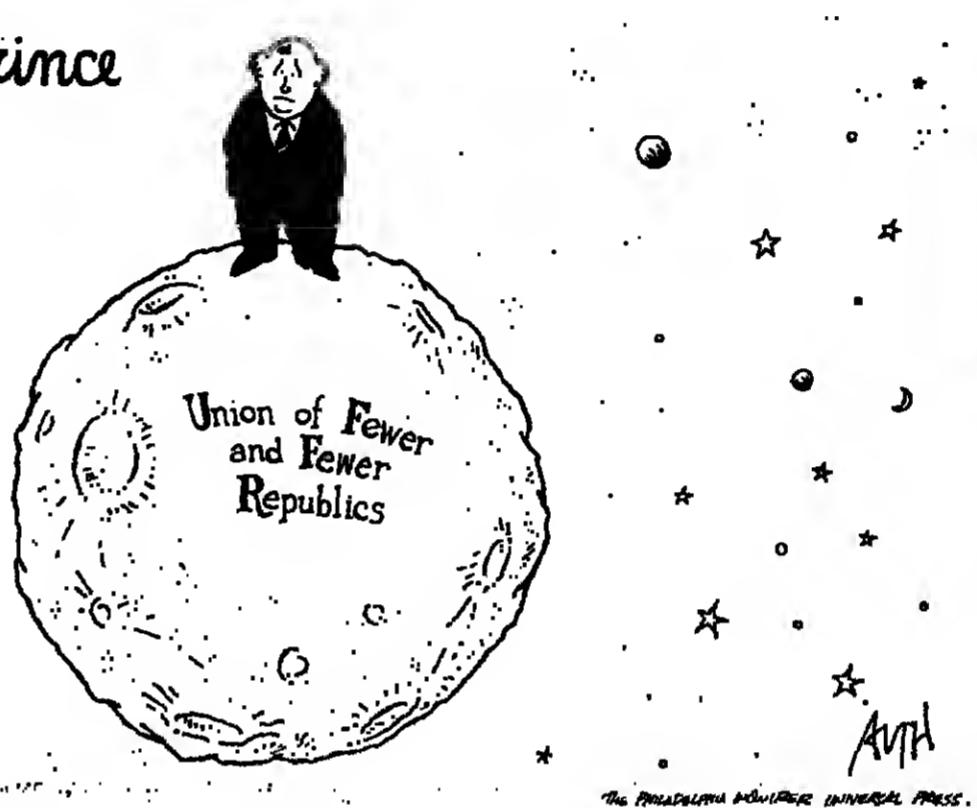
From the U.N. point of view and from the international law perspective, the ratification of such an instrument is at least a theoretical test of whether a certain country rejects racism in all

its forms and whether it abhors the application and policy of racism in all its manifestations.

There is also the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which is nearly universally ratified with the exception of very few countries, including Israel. On the long list of international treaties pertaining to human rights where Israel's name is notably absent are the following: The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, the Convention on the Non-applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages, the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and other related conventions. As can be seen, Israel's record vis-a-vis many highly important treaties is anything but encouraging. Would it not be more fair to ask of Israel to change its stance on such internationally binding instruments, in word and deed, before considering the repeal of the troubling stigma attached to it because of the resolution equating Zionism with racism?

There is no doubt that in the context of the ongoing peace negotiations between the Arab side and Israel such an issue can be put on the negotiating table. If there is genuine peace between the two sides, all such pestering issues stand to be rectified to the satisfaction of all the parties. But before peace is attained and prior to Israel's decision to reverse its negative position on the relevant internationally-binding human rights treaties, it would be premature and unfair to even attempt to rescind the resolution on Zionism equating racism.

The Little Prince



More flags, fewer illusions in East Europe

By Douglas Hamitoo
Reuter

VIEENNA — The old Soviet Union is gone. Yugoslavia has broken apart. Unfamiliar flags of newly-independent nations encircle Eastern Europe as it ends a tough year, signalling an even less certain future.

Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Moldova are re-emerging from the pages of Balkan history. Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia are breaking loose from the Soviet empire. Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania are already sovereign.

"Balkanisation" — a 1914 label for backward little nation states which ignited wars — is again a topical term.

Europe's history in 1991 was stained by Vukovar, the shell-shocked ruin of a city on the Danube between warring Croats and Serbs and by Dobrovnik, the Adriatic jewel used as target practice for Yugoslav army Howitzers.

It was the worst fighting on the continent since 1945.

Unless it stops and U.N. peacekeeping troops are deployed, analysts fear Bosnia-Herzegovina may be sucked in what one Western minister called a "war without winners."

"I do not rule out a general civil war," said Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic this month, as the conflict raged just a few hours drive from Venice and Vienna.

Yugoslavia's drama apart, 1992 looks like being another year of presidential race, and the European Community preoccupied with forging unity of its own, self-reliant nationalism can be a positive force.

After joyously shedding communism, the peoples of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania learned there was no such thing as instant democracy and prosperity.

From Gdansk to Bucharest, shops filled up with consumer goods, but prices rocketed and

joblessness climbed as the painful, chaotic withdrawal from central planning continued.

To the dismay of well-wishers, an ingrained "old mentality" of law expectations has shackled initiative, while unleashed nationalism has flourished like a weed.

"New states on the fringes of Central Europe will be rivals for Western help. They may also harbour trouble, in the shape of ethnic millions misplaced behind World War II borders."

New states on the fringes of central Europe will be rivals for Western help. They may also harbour trouble, in the shape of ethnic millions misplaced behind World War II borders.

"It is an absolute illusion to talk about a peaceful and civilised separation, since personal interests will be in the game," said Franics Sebej, a moderate Slovak politician.

Europe, like an old pullover, could unravel if a thread is pulled, Mr. Sebej commented.

"There is one big unknown — the silent majority," he added.

"Either they are decent people or... demoralised, lazy and silly people. And then we have bad luck."

In Poland, voters already seem disillusioned with democracy. In October, fewer than half voted in the first free general election since World War II.

A deeply fragmented parliament emerged, creating the risk of chronic instability and raising doubts over the resolve of future governments to stick to harsh economic medicine.

Yet, if they can cooperate in a free trade zone, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia are seen as East Europe's strongest growth prospects. With peace in Yugoslavia, well-organised Slovenia and Croatia could join, making a market of 77 million.

But Romania, Bulgaria and Albania, with 36 million people in total, all suffer from political instability.

Here, the flavour of Balkan strife remains strong.

Romania's Prime Minister Theodor Stolojan thinks it could take up to seven years to erect the legal and institutional structures

As 1991 draws to a close, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker was raised the frightening spectre of the Soviet Union dissolving into "a Yugoslavia, with nukes thrown in."

Nationalist strains, albeit of less violent potential, also challenge Czechoslovakia, where Slovaks separate and the cost of economic change have increased anxieties. Talks on the Czech-Slovak split are deadlocked, threatening to warp elections due next June.

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Romania's Prime Minister Theodor Stolojan thinks it could take up to seven years to erect the legal and institutional structures

needed for a new economic system.

Another tough task, he said, was "the eradication of communism... a true cancer of society."

For Mr. Stolojan, who took office in September after rioting miners forced out Petre Roman, the main job in 1992 will be consolidating a frail democracy.

Analysts believe Romanians face a series of coalitions over the coming years, and that their fate will also be linked to ethnic Romanians next door in the Soviet Union.

Elections last October gave economically strapped Bulgaria its first non-communist government. But, here too, analysts see fragmentation next year, worsened by ethnic Turkish discontent.

"1992 will be a year of sharpening conflicts in the ruling non-communist union of democratic forces, which will lead to a new split," predicted leading sociologist Tsvetozar Tomov.

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In Albania, a horse-and-cart economy in a country endowed with resources, 1991 ended with 40 dead in a stampede for bread and troops doing loaves to prevent mob rule.

The governing coalition of democrats and ex-communists had fallen apart, and young politicians who united to sweep four decades of Stalinism aside just a year before fell to squabbling amongst themselves.

LETTERS

It's time for peace!

To the Editor:

PEACE conference, peace talks, peace initiative, peace efforts. We've got used to hearing these words over and over and thought that they are the problem solvers of the dilemma of the oppressed people who suffer greatly because of occupation. Now, as we watch the convening of the long-awaited peace conference, we realise that not only holding of the conference, but also having the will, the honest will, to live in peace and mutual understanding are equally needed.

Arabs living under the cruel, brutal occupation exercised by Israelis in the Golan Heights, South Lebanon and the holy land of Palestine, had enough suffering and witnessed more bloodshed than anyone would take. Yet they are ready to try to forgive and live in peace.

Although the Israeli aggressors have the chance to live peacefully with their Arab neighbours (as they used to claim every time they had the chance to pretend to want peace

Jordan will not negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians

By Allison Kaplan
The Jerusalem Post

WASHINGTON — Perhaps it is because of his profession that Dr. Abdul Salam Majali chooses a colourful medical metaphor to describe what he believes would ensue if bilateral talks with Israel do not go at the slow and careful pace that Jordan advocates.

"I think if we push things down our throats, everybody will have indigestion," Dr. Majali said in an interview Friday, settled in his hotel suite wearing traditional dress and his trademark black-rimmed glasses.

That is why Dr. Majali said he refuses to have the kind of casual hotel-room meetings and telephone conversations with Israeli negotiators that Israel has asked him for, and it is why he says it is still too early to move the ongoing bilateral negotiations to the Middle East, as Israel would like.

But the chief negotiator for Jordan in the bilateral talks was personally taking what some would view as a step toward normalization between Israel and Jordan by sitting in the Willard Hotel here, discussing the peace process with two Israeli reporters.

As he described his position on the negotiations, the 66-year-old doctor seemed to be looking for Israeli understanding of the inability of a Jordanian leader to make any moves to press the Palestinians to agree to negotiate substantive issues as a team, rather than in separate rooms.

"I cannot and I will not at all

negotiate on the Palestinians' behalf," he said, leaning forward for emphasis. "I have vital interests with them, but I will not speak on their behalf."

Making frequent references to the "rejectionist" forces in the Arab World, Dr. Majali said that any move he made that appears to subsume the Palestinians threatens not only the peace process but the very lives of Jordanians who appear to be negotiating the Palestinian national identity, and listed those who had died for appearing to make this attempt.

"I lost my cousin because of this, because Hizam Majali was trying to have some negotiations with the Palestinian side. King Abdullah lost his life, Wasfi Tall lost his life. I am not going to lose my life."

Dr. Majali said that he has tried to bring that point across to Israeli negotiator Elyakim Rubinstein, while sitting on the couch in the State Department corridor, that only the Palestinians can make concessions to Israel, and therefore, Israel must accept their desire to solidly split the Jordanian-Palestinian representation into two tracks.

"I tried to explain it to him. I said that if I go and sit with him alone, even my delegation thinks I'm making a secret deal. So I am betraying the cause. I lose my credibility with my own people. Is that what you want?" Mr. Majali sighed. "Sometimes, I think that's what he wants."

Because of the corridor diplomacy among the Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian delegations,

tions over the issue of meeting rooms, the talks became three days of marathon sessions for Mr. Majali on a sofa in the State Department with Mr. Rubinstein and Palestinian negotiator Haider Abdul Shafi — not easy for any 66-year-old to take.

"The place is not comfortable," he said, "but I am one of the people who thinks that these three days were not wasted. I think it is a great step forward that people sat together in front of everybody, not with closed doors. In fact, the idea of sitting on that couch is a million times better than sitting across from each other. Because then, you would be talking at each other and there is a lot of difference between talking at each other and with each other."

As for the delegates, who have been mingling in the corridor around the three negotiators drinking endless cups of coffee, the human interaction is valuable, he said. "The first time they may not smile, but the second time they smile after they see somebody because you recognise them. That in itself, I believe, is a great step."

He said that "as a man of science" he cannot understand what he interpreted as a reversal of Mr. Rubinstein's agreement in Madrid to continue talks along two tracks dealing with Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Jordanian issues.

While he admitted that there was a great deal of overlap on the issues, he said the Jordanians and Palestinians would hash out issues of health, education, cur-

rency and water between themselves, a process that he said would also be a "headache."

"I told him flatly, when he was pushing me to sit there and to be with them, I said look here, I have more difficulty discussing issues with the Palestinians than with you because there are more details there, especially in the future, that will have an effect on us — if we really are talking of confederation."

He indicated, however, that in his view the time has come for the U.S. to intervene and make a decision about the structure of the bilateral meetings, making the analogy to a marriage counselor working out issues between a couple who cannot agree.

American mediation, after all,

should be welcome for the Israelis since "we believe, and history proves it, that the Americans are on your side all the time — or 99 per cent of the time."

The U.S. intervention is setting the venue of Washington for this round of bilateral talks was vital since the two sides could not reach agreement, he said.

While Jordan does not rule out moving to the Middle East at some point during the negotiations, the time has not yet come to move to a Middle East venue — even if that location is a place like Cyprus, and not Israel and Jordan.

"I feel they insist we go to that area, we will be under the media spotlight and increased pressure. If you are in Cyprus or in Egypt, everyone in the street becomes more interested, and if it goes, it

goes to the media, the rejectionists on both sides and so on. Already people tell us if you go to a negotiation with the Israelis they will never ever give you anything — don't waste your time. And now they are being proven right because here we have been 10 days and got nothing, not a sign. If we go there, it becomes worse."

But if there is concrete progress in the talks and the "rejectionists" lose their stand, then we could be in the area."

Dr. Majali's main complaint with Mr. Rubinstein and the Israelis in general was that they are too, "short sighted." They should not look at points like venue or structure of the talks and instead look at what they can gain, he said.

In his opinion, the vision of peace should motivate the Israelis to compromise on procedural points.

"These negotiations will end like what the Egyptians had. These negotiations are to be finalised and crystallised with the peace — proper peace — recognition openness."

"When in the long run, when you think of recognition of the Palestinians, solving this problem, you are going to have the recognition of all of the Arab states, all the Third World, all the Muslim world, you are going to have the markets opened. And you know the capabilities of the Israelis here in the United States. You are a small minority, but you have a lot of influence. So... once the door is open the influence is there. One has to look ahead."

He said that "as a man of science" he cannot understand what he interpreted as a reversal of Mr. Rubinstein's agreement in Madrid to continue talks along two tracks dealing with Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Jordanian issues.

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Bahrain: A rich history

By Florence Duyse

BAHRAIN, which means "the two seas" is an archipelago of 33 islands, the largest of which gives its name to the state. The opening of the causeway which links Bahrain to Saudi Arabia in 1986 means that Bahrain is no longer an island, in the true sense of the word.

The Epic of Gilgamesh, which is known to us through fragments of Sumerian script, describes Gilgamesh of today — as a kind of Elysium or paradise where eternal happiness reigned. (The likeness, in Alabaster, of the hero Gilgamesh can be seen in the Louvre Museum, Paris).

There are also the copper artifacts, discovered in the north of the island, on the site of the temple of Babar near the village bearing the same name, and which have led archaeologists to believe that, in these regions, there were intense trading activities in copper from Oman and the Indus Valley.

A great many things are changing in these islands of the Arabian Gulf. Bahrain has enjoyed prosperity for thousands of years.

It is this past that holds the respect of the Bahrainis and, according to the Prime Minister, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, well equips them to face the future with full wisdom and enthusiasm. History has handed down its inheritance. The future holds many challenges in store.

While Europe and North America were still firmly in the grip of the Ice Age, the land, known today as Bahrain, was enjoying a temperate climate

somewhat similar to that of modern Greece. At that time, sea level was about 100 metres below that of today, and it is almost certain that Bahrain was once before connected to the mainland, and remained so until around 6000 B.C.

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This complex, which consists of three buildings, contain four departments: ethnography, archaeology, natural history, and a documentation centre devoted to the site of the prehistoric burial ground. A number of rooms are devoted to the Heritage Centre in which the visitor can view reconstructed scenes depicting everyday life. This is a tribute to an ancient culture which has retained a deep respect for both its craftsmanship and traditions, at the same time, combining the lessons and experience learned from them with the means and methods of the modern world — Bahrain Today.

Cabinet poised to win vote

(Continued from page 1)

House on behalf of the six-member Independent Islamic Bloc, praised Jordan's democratization process and indicated a "yes" vote.

"Democracy means responsible behaviour and a way of life," he said. "Let us work together against anything that will harm our homeland and values and to respect the views of others..."

The King's speech i.e. the government policy statement has made clear Jordan's commitment to the principled stands of Jordanians and Palestinians towards solving the Palestinian problem and "we ask the government to remain committed to these principles," Mr. Bustanji said.

He called for continued support for upgrading the standards of the Armed Forces and increased care for the needs of the members of the forces.

The deputy called on the government to intensify its efforts to address the economic problems and seek solutions to the unemployment problem through expanding development projects.

Irbid Deputy Deeb Marji of the Democratic Bloc described the government policy statement as positive and said it included "essential elements in the internal as well as external spheres."

Dr. Marji laid out a series of demands from the government, including solutions to unemployment and evenly distributed development assistance to all areas of the Kingdom.

He also called for new policies to govern prices, housing, social welfare, medical specialisations and care for the disabled, efforts to address the problem of poverty and administrative reforms.

Salim Zoubi of Irbid, who resigned from the government of Taha Masri in October citing opposition to the peace talks, said Jordan was facing a "challenge to its survival."

Mr. Zoubi, also of the Democratic Bloc, said Jordan was duty-bound to accept the "choice of the people because of its geographical location and its realities."

He supported the government's programme to make the 1990s a decade of educational reform and called on the executive authority to guide the affairs of private universities in the Kingdom.

Spearheading calls for a dedicated Jordanian government to lift the embargo on Iraq, imposed by the United Nations Security Council after the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, was Mohammad Abu Olein (Mafraq), a member of the 17-member Constitution Bloc which has four deputies in the Sharif Zeid cabinet.

"We are distressed and in pain to witness Iraqi children, women and the elderly starve to death," said Dr. Abu Olein. "We call on our government to pursue its efforts on the Arab, Islamic and regional as well as international scenes to end the sanctions against Iraq," he said.

The Amman deputy also questioned the agreement that Jordan reached with international agencies to manage the Kingdom's economic problems.

Mr. Nabulsi said he respected the integrity and honesty of Sharif Zeid, but did not have such sentiments towards "some" of the ministers.

He also accused unidentified members of parliament of seeking power through ministerial posts.

Deputy Mtair Bostaqji (Karak), who addressed the

"We demand that the government press on with the demand of lifting the embargo, which is a vengeful act against the Arab Nādīn and aims at serving the Zionist-American designs," said Mr. Arar.

Nader Thuheirat, National Bloc, underlined the need for increased cooperation and interaction between the government and parliament to implement programmes designed to improve the standard of living and argued solutions to unemployment and soaring prices.

Mr. Thuheirat, who represents the Jordan Valley, gave an added importance to the agricultural sector in Jordan and called for an all-out government effort to assist this sector.

The draft budget, which incorporates all the elements of the economic programme, is under review by the House Finance Committee.

On the political front, Mr. Tarawneh described Jordan's strength as deriving from the "democratic path it has chosen."

Mr. Tarawneh said he understood the pressures that Jordan was under and the Kingdom's

approach to the peace talks with Israel, but he could not support the negotiations because of his personal convictions.

Observers expected Mr. Tarawneh to abstain in Monday's voting, which will come after speeches by 10 more deputies and Sharif Zeid's reply to the House.

Kurdish sources say that international parliamentarians will be invited to observe the election.

Autonomy for Kurdistan is expected to be the dominant issue.

Mr. Barzani brought a draft autonomy agreement back from Baghdad in mid-August. Mr. Talahani regularly attacks the draft, saying it lacks guarantees for human and political rights and cedes too much Kurdish-claimed territory to Baghdad's control.

Mr. Barzani acknowledges the proposed pact's deficiencies, but spends much of his time trying to find common ground between Baghdad and the front.

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Jordan Times

RACJ prepares full agenda for 1992 auto sports season

By Aileen Bannayan

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Auto sports enthusiasts will have a full agenda to prepare for as the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) has set the 1992 season schedule with nine events that will surely suit everyone's taste.

The 1992 season will begin on Feb. 7 with an autotest which will be followed by the National Rally on Feb. 21.

The long awaited Jordan International Rally will take place on May 21-22 as part of the Middle East Rally Championship and in which the best drivers in the region will hopefully be taking part.

The first rallytour of the season will be the Oki Fax Rallytour on June 26 followed by another autotest on July 31.

The popular Runman Hill Climb will take place on Aug. 21.

The third autotest is set for Oct. 9 while the second National Rally of the year will be on Nov. 20. The season will be concluded with a rallytour set for Dec. 18.

The organizing committee at RACJ hope that all auto sports competitors will actively take part in the scheduled events in order to achieve a successful and competitive season.

"The quality of the organized events — in terms of pin-point organization and active participation and the achievement of better results — is our foremost aim," said Mr. Basbar Asfour, told the Jordan Times.

"The 1991 season was quite good. We have some excellent drivers but the problem they face is the absence of sponsors. This is why a great number of competitors took part in the rallytours as there's not much expense involved and no set specifications for the participating cars," said Mr. Asfour.

Adding that "if drivers take part in all the events, their continued participation and re-



A scene from the 1983 Jordan International Rally (file-photo)

sults would hopefully draw enough sponsorship to further enhance auto sports in Jordan."

The 1990-91 auto sports season now over with Nasar Bustami topping the standings in the Drivers Open Championship of Jordan with a lead of 176.5 points. He is closely followed by Ghathil Bilbeisi in 164 points in second place, while Ma'ruf Abu Samra finished third with 152 points.

Almad Komok, who won this year's final autotest, captured the Autotests Open Championship first place with 57 points.

Drivers Open runner up Bilbeisi came in second with 52 points and Sinaan Sandi followed closely with 51 points in third place.

The 1991 season witnessed only five events as it commenced with the Oki Fax rallytour on May 31 in which Suhail Marar and George Haddad won first place. Amjad Farrah and Mazen Dajani came in second, while Sinaan Sandi

and S. Al Khatib finished third. The Baladna rallytour was on Aug. 30 in which Sinaan Sandi and Khaled Abu Ghazaleh won first place followed by Wa'el Abdou and Tareq Mughrabi in second place and Isha Halabi and Leith Bisharat finished third.

Ma'ruf Abu Samra won the Asfour Autotest on Sept. 20 followed by Basbar Bustami in second place and Yanael Komok in third place. Ahmad Komok won the second autotest on Oct. 25, followed by Ma'ruf Abu Samra in second place and Ghathil Bilbeisi in third place.

The Qatar Rally on Feb. 13-14; the Lebanon Raillies on June 19-20 and later on Oct. 10-11; the Oman Rally on Oct. 29-30; and the Dubai Rally on Dec. 3-4 in addition to the aforementioned Jordan International Rally.

According to Mr. Asfour, the United Arab Emirates will organize the Desert Challenge Rally on April 22-24 and the Cyprus International Rally will be held on Sept. 24-27.

finished third. Ruha Darwisch and Shaden Shunqan in an Opel Omega won the ladies category.

"A positive attribute about 1992 is that it will include all the events competitors have been waiting for. (The 1990-91 season was disrupted following the Gulf war and events in the region). Everyone is anticipating a year full of competition, which is very encouraging," said Mr. Asfour.

The 1992 Middle East Championship schedule has also been set with the following rallies:

The Qatar Rally on Feb. 13-14; the Lebanon Raillies on June 19-20 and later on Oct. 10-11; the Oman Rally on Oct. 29-30; and the Dubai Rally on Dec. 3-4 in addition to the aforementioned Jordan International Rally.

According to Mr. Asfour, the United Arab Emirates will organize the Desert Challenge Rally on April 22-24 and the Cyprus International Rally will be held on Sept. 24-27.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

AC Milan stretches lead

ROME (R) — Unbeaten AC Milan extended their lead at the top of the Italian League to two points Sunday with a 1-1 draw at Lazio while second-placed Juventus lost 1-0 at champions Sampdoria. German striker Kartheinz Riedle gave Lazio the lead in the 52nd minute but prolific Dutchman Marco van Basten put Milan back on level terms just three minutes later. A headed goal by Sampdoria's Yugoslav midfielder Srecko Katanec condemned Juventus to only their second league defeat of the season. Third-placed Napoli had to settle for a 3-3 draw at home to Foggia after conceding two late goals. They remain four points behind Milan. The Italian League programme now takes a three-week break with Bari still without a league win after 14 games. They drew 0-0 at home to Atalanta Sunday and to add to their woes defender Giovanni Loseto was sent off early in the second half.

Marseille crushes Rennes 5-1

PARIS (R) — A hat trick by ace marksman Jean-Pierre Papin helped league leaders Marseille to a comfortable 5-1 home victory against struggling Rennes in the French League Saturday. Papin now tops the table of scorers with 16 goals, followed by Liberian striker George Weah, who scored his 14th to help Monaco clinch a 3-1 victory against Cannes. The club of the principality stay second three points behind the French champions, who have a game in hand. Marseille, who had been relatively unimpressive in their last few matches, delighted their home fans, with international midfielders Franck Sauzeau and Jean-Philippe Durand scoring a goal each. Unfashionable Caen, who fell 5-1 at Auxerre, and Paris St. Germain, who drew 1-1 at Le Havre, share third place two points behind Monaco. Nimes, without international striker Eric Cantona, who said Thursday he was ending his professional career after being suspended for two months by the French League's disciplinary commission, managed the only goalless draw of the night at Lens.

PSV consolidates lead in Dutch League

AMSTERDAM (R) — PSV Eindhoven did just enough to beat lowly Fortuna Sittard 1-0 Saturday night to consolidate their slim lead in the Dutch first division. But the PSV team's depletion through injuries was only too well reflected in lame play which undermined the urgent need to get their star Brazilian international striker Romario off the sick list to put some spark back into their attack. It took 37 minutes of uneventful play before Willem Kieft was able to find the solitary goal. PSV now move clear at the top of the league with 30 points from 18 games. But Feyenoord follows just two points behind after the same number of games and will have a chance to close the gap Sunday when they host mid-ranking local rivals Sparta Rotterdam.

Abdul Jabbar mulls comeback

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Former Los Angeles Lakers centre Kareem Abdul Jabbar is thinking about coming out of retirement to dramatize former Magic Johnson's fight against AIDS, with the implication that any salary would go to HIV research. "It's something that crossed my mind," Abdul Jabbar said in a television interview with CBS. "When I heard the news about Earvin's HIV positive testing, it really affected me and I wanted to do something to help my friend. And the thing I do best is play basketball. And it is the first thing that came into my mind. "It's been really hard trying to figure out exactly how to contribute to the efforts to deal this problem. And I always felt that I should do what I do best, which is play basketball." Abdul Jabbar, 44, the National Basketball Association's (NBA) all-time leading scorer and shot-blocker, retired from the Los Angeles Lakers after the 1989-90 season.

Olympic flame feted in Paris

PARIS (AP) — Two thousand people dressed in white and carrying torches, banners and illuminated mobiles marched up the Champs Elysees Saturday to mark the arrival of the Winter Olympic flame to this country. Following the torch up the broad avenue, the marchers represented snow, the colours of the French flag and Olympic rings, and the savoy region in the French Alps where February's games will be held. Some 200,000 spectators shivered in the cold, rarely applauding, as they watched the flame lead the procession up Paris' most famous boulevard. Mournful, avant-garde music by composer Nicolas Frize poured from speakers as the marchers strode past, some clanging cowbells and others calling out, "we're cold."

Galloway retains WBO title

CAPE TOWN (R) — Manning Galloway of the United States retained his World Boxing Organisation (WBO) welterweight title with a split points decision over Nika Khumalo of South Africa. Two of the three judges had the American ahead on points after the 12-round fight. Khumalo scored the only knockdown in the eighth round.

Team officials said Kaclin will be sidelined for several weeks, thus missing the Olympic Games in Albertville in February.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY DECEMBER 16, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation
GENERAL TENDENCIES: Obtaining the advice you need from a higher-up won't be as difficult as you assume it is going to be this afternoon and evening, especially through a chance meeting that occurs.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are able to go directly to the most influential person with whom you have any contact whatever and get him to help you make your daily existence more satisfactory.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Make sure you listen to what that new acquaintance has to say who has had more experience in lines of endeavour that appeal very much to you.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Organise those obligations and responsibilities whether of a personal or business nature so they are handled in a more even and suitable fashion.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't be so timid and sensitive but talk out that situation existing between you and another so that you can have more accord.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have many tasks to do but first you would be wise to make your surroundings more attractive so that you can operate there with more pleasure.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can have some happy moments today but especially if you prepare for them early in the day by making appointments with those you like.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Look at how conditions are trending at your residence and show you do value the good will of those family members who mean so much to you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You now are able to see and enjoy the many personal and usual contacts with whom you have any sort of desire to see more and you can get out correspondence.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Whatever brings you increased income is very good for you now so make a point to show you are the one who is practical minded and financial based.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Your interest in gaining more personal good will from social contacts is fine now so contact those you like and let them see you are devoted to them.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Your goal now is to prepare yourself for the future which is excellent but make sure you do show others you are the one who is willing to take advice from experts.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your need for more social contact is now important so join in any group activities where there are similar interests to your own you may have.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris

HARRIG

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JUMBLE

THAT SCRABLED WORD GAME by Henr Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FLAUW

EXOID

WHYROT

LOMUVE



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumble: RURAL EJECT DETACH POSTAL

Answer: What the fopst found it "easy" being "HARD" TO PLEASE

THE Daily Crossword

by Louis Santrey

ACROSS

1 Copper blade

6 Silver

10 Needle

14 Spring

15 Baltic feeder

16 Winged

17 Bedside

taffeta

18 The rapid growth of hair

19 Gasless vehicle

20 Joel Harris character

22 Jacques Cousteau

23 Negative

24 Christopher's addition

26 Pure

30 Spoke

32 Helen's prodector

33 Lucy's mother

35 War godess

37 Sp. houses

38 Helen's hometown

40 Army supplies

42 Hall

45 Despote

46 Belfast's county

48 "— Town"

49 A Webster

50 US artist

57 Notion

59 Uncanny

60 Within pref.

61 Proximate

62 Damge

64 Geometer's finding

69 Scratches e.g.

31 Russ. sea

Financial Markets Jordan Times
in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (December 9-December 13, 1991)

AMMAN — The U.S. currency fluctuated within narrow margins during the previous week, as news of the Soviet developments and EC summit dominated trading activity. It thus ended the week marginally higher against the pound and yen, but an average of 1.37 per cent higher against other European currencies.

The dollar recovered slightly Monday on short covering, particularly in view of market concerns over the likely consequences of the break-up of the Soviet Union. Traders were also watchful for the EC summit in Maastricht. The dollar thus closed at what proved to be its lowest levels for the week against major currencies at 1.5715 marks and 128.28 yen.

Thursday took the U.S. unit even higher due to continued apprehension about the situation in the USSR. Conflicting rumours and reports about the likelihood of President Gorbachev's resignation forced short term demand for the dollar. The dollar ended at its highest against the pound starting at 1.3860 dollars to the pound, which added substantially at the end of the week.

Wednesday, on the other hand, witnessed a dollar retreat, encouraged by the perceived lessening in tension in the USSR, and failure to push the dollar to breaching resistance at 1.5960 marks. The German currency witnessed renewed appreciation against the yen to reach 81.94 yen as the Japanese unit suffered from the continued decline in Tokyo stock prices and speculation of a near term decrease in interest rates.

The successful conclusion of the EC summit, namely towards moving closer towards a complete monetary union in 1999, lessened fears of a German interest rate hike under the umbrella of a realignment of ERM exchange rates. But some analysts, nevertheless, maintained that the Bundesbank will avoid raising interest rates as long as the dollar remains below 1.60 marks, but may have to raise them if the mark retreats.

Favourable U.S. economic data boosted the dollar against European currencies Thursday. The mark's retreat to 81.64 yen limited the dollar's gains against the Japanese currency, however.

Trading activity centered on the pound sterling Friday. The pound rose sharply against all major currencies after comments from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the pound's fluctuation bands within the ERM will eventually be reduced from six per cent to 2.25 per cent, while keeping its present central value of 2.95 marks. The Chancellor's comments alleviated previous expectations of a devaluation in the pound, which rose sharply to reach 2.8772 marks and 1.8210 dollars, as traders hurried to cover short positions against the mark and the dollar.

Some analysts, however, remained skeptical, maintaining the motive behind the Chancellor's remarks was to boost the pound in order to justify an interest rate cut before elections next July. They, nevertheless, agreed that the comments were in line with the EC's commitment to avoid a realignment. They added that the Bank of France's reported intervention in the U.S. market, in which it sold marks for the French franc, was a further demonstration of this commitment, when taking into consideration that central banks seldom intervene directly outside their home market.

In the U.S., November's Consumer Price Index showed a marginal rise, thus fuelling expectations of another Fed discount rate cut. Nevertheless, the dollar remained supported against the other European currencies, ending the week at its highest closing levels for the week against all but the pound. Observers attributed its temporary resilience, despite the bearish sentiment towards it, to a combination of factors: namely, the lack of new substantive economic information, the political upheavals in the Soviet republics, and the fact that most traders already have short dollar positions outstanding.

As for this week, while some observers are watchful for a German interest rate rise and/or a Fed interest rate cut, expectations are for a a dollar trading range of 1.35-1.61 marks.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

| Currency | 6/12/ 1991 Close | 13/12/1991 Close | Percent Change |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Sterling Pound* | 1.8165 | 1.8158 | (0.04) % |
| Deutsche Mark | 1.5565 | 1.5890 | (1.45) % |
| Swiss Franc | 1.3845 | 1.4030 | (1.52) % |
| French Franc | 5.3575 | 5.4300 | (1.34) % |
| Japanese Yen | 127.90 | 129.08 | (0.09) % |

USD per STG

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*

| Currency | 6/12/1991 | | 13/12/1991 | |
|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | 1-Month (%) | 1-Year (%) | 1-Month (%) | 1-Year (%) |
| U.S. Dollar | 4.81 | 4.62 | 4.68 | 4.56 |
| Sterling Pound | 10.50 | 10.56 | 10.56 | 10.51 |
| Deutsche Mark | 9.43 | 9.51 | 9.57 | 9.37 |

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 15/12/1991

| Currency | Bid | Offer |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| U.S. Dollar | 0.6800 | 0.6820 |
| Sterling Pound | 1.2331 | 1.2393 |
| Deutsche Mark | 0.4274 | 0.4295 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.4639 | 0.4663 |
| French Franc | 0.1201 | 0.1257 |
| Japanese Yen* | 0.5266 | 0.5292 |
| Dutch Guilder | 0.3791 | 0.3810 |
| Swedish Krona | 0.1177 | 0.1183 |
| Italian Lira* | 0.0566 | 0.0569 |
| Belgian Franc | 0.02076 | 0.02086 |

* Per 100

Major industrial states explore ways to aid weak world, Soviet economies

NEW YORK (R) — Deputy finance ministers from major industrial nations explored ways Saturday to promote economic reforms in the fast-disintegrating Soviet Union and faster, more sustainable growth in the global economy.

"We reviewed the world economy and the Soviet situation," U.S. Treasury Undersecretary David Mulford told reporters after a one-day meeting behind closed doors.

Canadian Deputy Finance Minister David Dodge said that both the Soviet and global economies looked worse than had been expected just a few months ago.

"All our economies are underperforming," he said.

Mr. Mulford said that the Group of Seven (G-7) nations — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — were all concerned about recent slow global growth.

Washington has called for an international conference next month to coordinate aid to the Soviet Union amid mounting concern that food shortages and economic chaos there could prompt a military coup.

Mr. Dodge complained that Europe and Japan have been slow to ship food to the Soviet Union and have failed to keep pace with the performance of Canada and the United States.

"From the Canadian perspective, and I'm sure that will be echoed by the Americans, we've heard a lot of talk but very little action" from Europe and Japan, he said.

The United States also wants to make sure that the IMF does everything it can to promote economic reforms in the fast-disintegrating Soviet Union. One G-7 source said that Washington wants the Soviet Union to withdraw its application for membership in the fund so that it would be easier for the increasingly individual republics to join.

U.S. airlines may lose \$2b this year

WASHINGTON (AP) — An airline industry spokesman has predicted that U.S. airline losses will approach \$2 billion this year, and he called for tax relief for the business.

The war in the Gulf "dried up our traffic and the recession's kept it down," Robert Aaronson, president of the Air Transport Association (ATA) of America, told a news conference. "The airline industry is in serious financial crisis."

Congress should cut ticket taxes and reduce taxes on air fares, he said. The current passenger ticket tax is 10 per cent, while the cargo tax is 6.25 per cent.

The industry is publicising its campaign with announcements

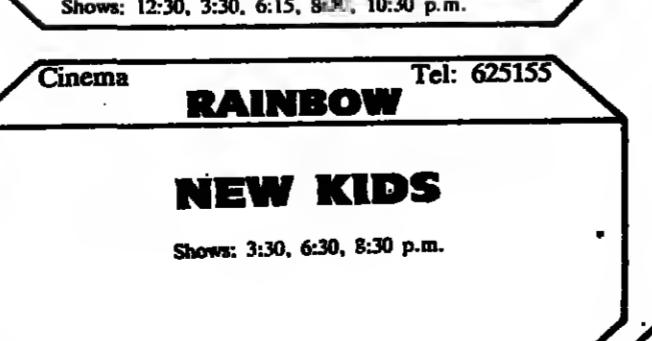


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World Bank wants more debt cuts for sub-Saharan Africa

WASHINGTON (AP) — The World Bank is looking to governments of well-off countries to relieve the debt burden of sub-Saharan Africa, but will not reduce the \$25 billion the countries owe the bank itself.

The bank estimates that major lending countries have forgiven billion in debt owed by sub-Saharan countries over the past four years. The total debt of these countries totals about \$176 billion.

Even though debtors' interest payments have been reduced by about \$900 million a year, the unpaid interest they owe is still piling up at an annual rate of nearly \$10 billion, according to the latest World Bank figures on international debt made public Sunday.

The bank's report said that if creditor nations adopted recent proposals to reduce debts, it "will make a major contribution to restoring external viability in many low-income African countries."

"In a few extreme cases, even more generous treatment may be required," it said.

Asked in an interview if the bank would write off some of its African loans, spokesman Peter Riddleberger said, "you'd never get a financial officer to recommend it. Our first concern is to protect our bondholders."

The bank is owned by 155 countries, including the debtor

countries. But most of the money it lends comes from the sale of bonds all over the world. Their price could decline sharply — and so could the bank's ability to lend — if it reduced debts owed to it.

Ishrat Husain, the bank's chief economist for Africa, estimated that a proposal by British Prime Minister John Major could wipe out another \$4 billion worth of debt for sub-Saharan nations.

Mr. Husain estimated the average rate of interest at five percent on debt, resulting in another \$2.3 billion in savings for the debtor nations.

"A breakthrough is needed," Mr. Husain told a news conference.

Mr. Major made his debt relief proposal for Africa's poorest countries over a year ago, when he was chancellor of the exchequer. Mr. Husain said the creditor governments have been discussing Mr. Major's proposal, but have come to no decision.

South Africa would not be a beneficiary, since the World Bank estimates its citizens average annual income at \$2,470 a year, too high to qualify for debt relief.

Mr. Husain said something should be done to help other countries which are much poorer, but have not received much debt relief.

He cited Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, whose 100 mil-

lion people earned an average of \$250 a year in 1989, according to the bank's latest figures. He suggested that help also should go to the Ivory Coast, Congo and Cameroon, where the average per capita income is \$1,000 or less.

The U.N. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) says the continent's economy may be on its way to a gradual recovery.

Issa Yassin Diallo, the ECA secretary general, predicted the growth of Africa's gross domestic product next year will remain steady at three per cent, same as this year.

"The region may well have entered into a phase of gradual recovery," Mr. Diallo said.

He attributed the favourable prospect to economic reforms by various governments and a "more solid partnership between Africa and its main development partners."

However, Mr. Diallo said economic reforms that might reduce income, increase unemployment and cut social services "will continue to raise considerable obstacles."

African leaders have repeatedly criticised reforms, especially those sponsored by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), saying they created hardships for the continent's poor.

Mr. Diallo said it was encouraging the two lending institutions were now "giving priority to the dual objective of economic growth with the poverty reduction, particularly through the creation of income generating employment for the disadvantaged."

Mr. Diallo made the comments in a meeting with foreign envoys and heads of United Nations agencies in Addis Ababa Thursday, but the report was not made public until Saturday.

He said agriculture was expected to benefit most from reforms. Growth in other sectors, however, would be slower.

Mr. Diallo said the shift of emphasis by the World Bank and IMF could make it easier for African nations to liberalise their economies, but the liberalisation should be gradual.

African countries shunning political reforms will find it difficult getting foreign aid, Mr. Diallo warned, because donors want democratisation.

He urged "a new and bolder approach" in the search for ways of solving the continent's massive foreign debt.

The total foreign debt owed by the sub-Saharan nations alone is about \$176 billion. Mr. Diallo said the aim should not be "the unrealistic elimination of debt" but to enable the continent to regain economic momentum lost "when the debt crisis arose more than a decade ago."

Total Third World and eastern European debt drops slightly

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Soviet Union is only "moderately" indebted, according to the World Bank, although estimates of its foreign debt range as high as \$100 billion.

The World Bank puts the Soviet debt at \$57 billion to \$71 billion in hard currency.

That figure does not include a few billion dollars in unpaid interest; Soviet debt in the soft, non-convertible currencies of eastern European and third world countries, and money that Soviet republics and enterprises may have borrowed and not reported, according to World Bank officials.

The World Bank's figures are contained in its two-volume "World Debt Tables, 1991-2," made public Sunday.

The World Bank put total Third World and eastern European debt at the end of 1991 at \$1.351 trillion, a slight drop from the \$1.355 trillion in 1990.

The Soviet debt burden is not so heavy when its resources and foreign earnings are compared with those of other countries, said Lawrence Summers, a World Bank vice president and its chief economist.

"Soviet debt is equivalent to the country's earnings in just two weeks," Mr. Summers told a news conference last week in advance of the release of the

annual report.

In some heavily indebted countries, the debt is equivalent to a year's total earnings or more, according to bank figures.

According to bank figures, more than two years' earnings by the entire population of the Congo and the Ivory Coast would be needed to pay back their coun-

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Gorbachev criticises Baker's remarks, sees role in transition

NEW YORK (AP) — Mikhail Gorbachev said in an interview released Saturday that his country is on a perilous course and that he might continue to play a role in order to preserve the reforms he struggled for. He gave no indication his resignation was imminent.

In an interview to appear in this week's edition of *Time* magazine, Gorbachev also expressed some anger at the U.S. response to the rapid developments in his country.

"(Secretary of State) James Baker was overly hasty in saying the Soviet Union no longer exists," he said in the interview, conducted Friday afternoon in Moscow. "Things are in flux here. While we're still trying to figure things out, the U.S. seems to know everything already. I don't think that's loyalty, particularly toward those of us who favour partnership and full-fledged cooperation."

Mr. Baker arrived in Moscow Sunday to meet with Mr. Gorbachev, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and other leaders.

In addition to expressing displeasure with Mr. Baker, Mr. Gorbachev also appeared angry at Mr. Yeltsin for not informing him about the Commonwealth plan.

"He didn't even call me. I found out that he had talked with George Bush and not to me. There was no need to draw Bush into this... I cannot approve or justify this style of behaviour. It's inadmissible."

In the interview, a transcript of which was seen Saturday, Mr. Gorbachev gave no indication his resignation was imminent. His spokesman, Andrei Grachev, said last week that the Soviet president intends to resign if a majority of the 12 remaining Soviet republics join the Commonwealth being set up by Mr. Yeltsin.

That could happen as soon as this week. On Friday, five more republics said they would become part of the Commonwealth, joining its founding Slavic republics — Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine.

Asked if he would still be president Monday, Mr. Gorbachev said: "I'm sure I will." The 60-year-old president also indicated he would act as necessary to keep the transition from becoming any more chaotic.

"I'll use my powers as president, first of all as commander-in-chief of the armed forces," he said. "It's critical that we not lose control of the situation."

The United States and others have expressed concern about control of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, and the subject is expected to be raised by Mr. Baker on his trip.

On the question of the nuclear arsenals security, Mr. Gorbachev said: "Any alarming speculation, here or abroad, about who will have his finger on the button is groundless."

Mr. Gorbachev did not spell out the part he might seek to play in the new Commonwealth, but indicated he did not intend to step aside completely.

"By interacting with my colleagues, I'll try to let them know what my position is and help them to come together and reach agreements," he said. "But I don't want to be like the guest of honour at a banquet... what I want to do is participate in formulating the framework of the Commonwealth and giving it substance."

"As far as my work is concerned, the main purpose of my life has already been fulfilled. I feel at peace with myself," he said. "At the same time, I feel that the capital I've accumulated should be fully used for the freedom of my country and international relations. And I feel strong enough to go on."

Mr. Gorbachev indicated he would make a strong pitch for more Western aid when he meets with Mr. Baker. "We need your help now. Immediately," he said. "Stop hesitation or we will all have to pay a greater price in the end."

President Bush announced last week he would convene an international conference on aid to the Soviet Union, which is struggling with food and fuel shortages as winter bears down.

Mr. Gorbachev told French President François Mitterrand Saturday he saw his role in a reformed Soviet Union as that of a guardian of democracy and constitutional order, Soviet News Agency (TASS) said.

The two leaders spoke by telephone.

phone about the new Commonwealth of independent states formed by the three Slav republics of Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia a week ago to replace the Soviet Union.

"Gorbachev said his task under the new conditions will be to preserve democracy and constitutional order, to guarantee observance by the former Soviet republics of their international obligations," TASS said.

In his conversation with Mr. Mitterrand, TASS said Mr. Gorbachev expressed views on how international assistance could be rendered "in this turbulent period of radical change in the country."

"There could be nothing worse for the country that if Gorbachev resigned and all the republics try to exist separately," said Valentine Utkina, a 26-year-old chemical factory worker.

"We have a multi-ethnic country. I am Russian, my relatives are mainly Ukrainians, and I think we should try to stay together as a union."

"I think tomorrow we will first seek a decision on the catalogue of criteria, and then afterwards the individual governments will have to make their decisions," he told Deutschlandfunk Radio.

Engineer Minna Axrieder agreed. "It was tactics for the leaders of the three republics to get together without agreeing first with Gorbachev, utterly foolish. I can't believe they spoke to Bush before speaking to Gorbachev," she said.

"I am for Gorbachev, and I don't like the idea of having separate republics. I think we need a union. I like it when all the republics are one happy family."

Armenian Susanna Nikogosyan was also against her republic joining the Commonwealth, but for different reasons.

"If you ask anyone in Armenia whether they want to be a part of the new Commonwealth, they will say 'no.' We want to be a completely independent state, we don't want to be dependent on anybody," she said.

"We had big gold reserves, but they were all taken from us and they gave us nothing. Now we're poor. I don't know what will happen next, but if we're separate, there's still hope."

Mr. Yakovlev, quoted by Moscow Radio, said the Democratic Reform Movement supported the Commonwealth, but believed it should be regarded only as an initiative and favoured holding a referendum.

"In his opinion, other variants are also possible. For example, a compromise between this agreement and draft union treaty being advocated by... Gorbachev," the radio said.

Mr. Yakovlev said society was en-

tering a dangerous period when democracy could be challenged by "the angry man in the street."

Meanwhile, Soviet citizens believe Mikhail Gorbachev may soon be an ex-president, and many say good riddance to the man they hold personally responsible for the decrepit state of the economy.

"Gorbachev should have resigned a long time ago, when his influence first started to wane," said construction worker Slava Kokhlov. "He should just go fishing at his dacha — if the Ukrainians give him permission."

For some, however, a future without Mr. Gorbachev looks bleak.

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